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Perception of the Pop Industry and Idols:

A Comparative Study of Japanese and American College Students

Outline

1. Significance of the Study

2. Research Questions

3. Research Background

- a. Development of Pop Idols in America and Japan
- b. How the Pop Industry Functions
- c. Examples of Pop Idols
- d. Current Role of Pop Idols in Media and Society
- e. Current Controversies and Endeavors of Pop Idols

4. Research Method

5. Bibliography

Significance of the Study

- We share an interest in pop music and related mediums
- We are especially interested in the surrounding culture and industry
- Taken classes at CSUMB and abroad:
 - Visual Arts, Japanese Art History, Cool Japan Today, and Japanese Pop Culture
- Through this research we want to explore the role and perception by Japanese and American College Students of:
 - Pop Music Industry
 - Idols

Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of pop idols within social media and their usage?
2. What are the perceptions of the pop idol industry and its methods of promotion in social media?

Research Background

- Development of Pop Idols in America and Japan
- How The Pop Industry Functions
- Examples of Pop Idols (Japan & America)
- Current Role of Pop Idols in Social Media and Society
- Current Controversies and Endeavors of Pop Idols

Development of Pop Idols in America

- The category known as “popular music”, which has in recent decades become heavily associated with idols, has no clear starting point in American music industry, but became close to how we know it today as recently as the 80’s and 90’s. (Glauser, 2017)
- Over time various flavors of pop music have come and gone, with the current trend leaning toward R&B and EDM sounds. On top of this with the interconnectivity of the world through social media and the internet, Pop music has started to cross national borders and has become a major powerhouse in the entertainment industry.

Development of Pop Idols in Japan

- While traces could be found in jazz in the 20's-50's, the origins really were in kayoukyoku, or “lyrical singing music”. After WWII during the US occupation, there was a heavy influx of American Pop music, which over time started to be covered in Japanese, and then sparking original songs.

(Nagaoka, 2017)

- This eventually gave birth to female idols, which further developed into male and group idol industry. This genre has grown into a multi-billion yen industry, and has become an export and cultural phenomena of Japan.

(Fukuya, 2013)

How the Pop Industry Functions

America

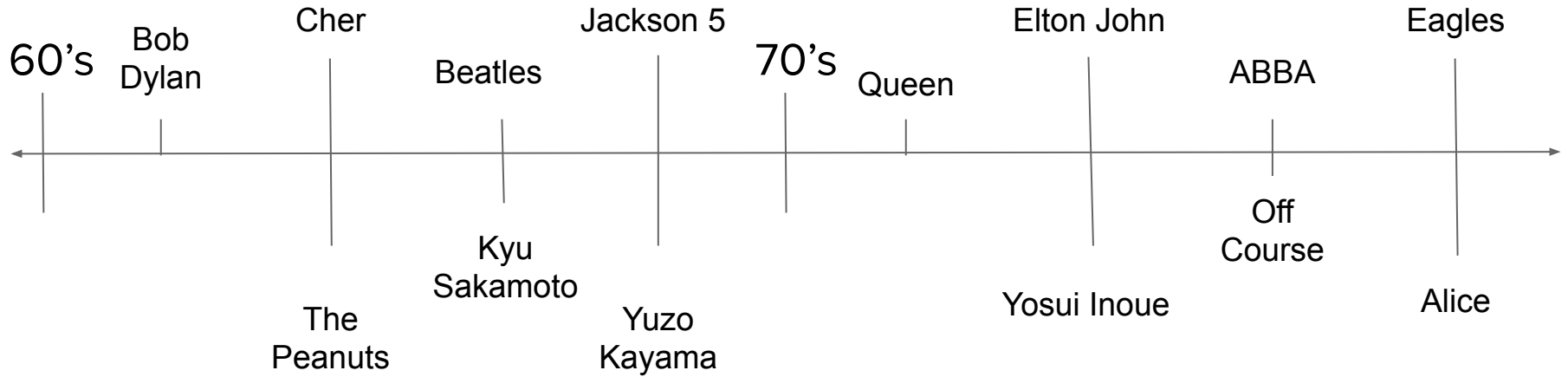
- Labels
 - While many labels exist, many are actually under a small number of umbrella companies.
 - Warner Brothers Records, BGM, Sony Records
- Contracts
 - Generally focus on royalties and creative rights.
 - Can be legally binding for term length and exclusivity.
 - No personal life input (normally).
- Public Image
 - While many artists have publicists and managers to help, generally they shape their own image via social media, relationships, and independent interactions
- Fan Interaction
 - Mostly interacts through concerts, merchandise, and social media.

How the Pop Industry Functions

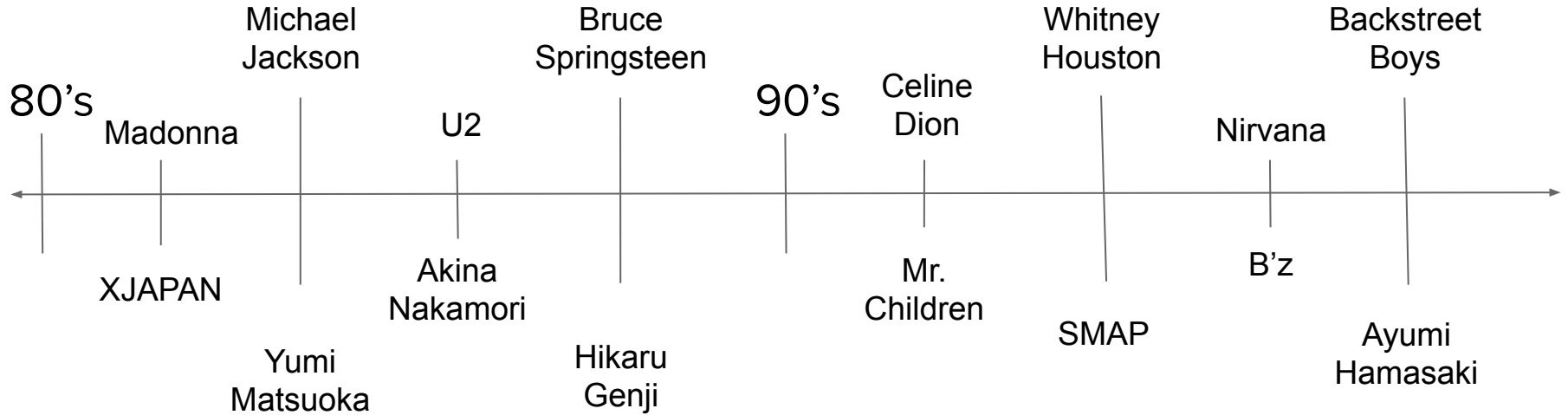
Japan

- Labels
 - The Large labels dominate the market, but some independent labels do exist.
 - Warner Music Japan Inc., Avex Entertainment Inc /Avex Marketing Inc., JVC Kenwood Victor Entertainment Corp., Sony Music Entertainment (Japan), Inc., Johnny and Associates
- Contracts
 - Depending on the record, can cover everything from music and creative rights, to public image and personal life (esp. dating, etc.)
- Public Image
 - Idols especially are expected to keep a clean image and avoid any form of scandal. They are assisted heavily by the labels, managers, and scheduled promotions.
- Fan Interaction
 - Fan interaction is a massive market in and of itself, with signing and meeting events, promotional campaigns, etc.

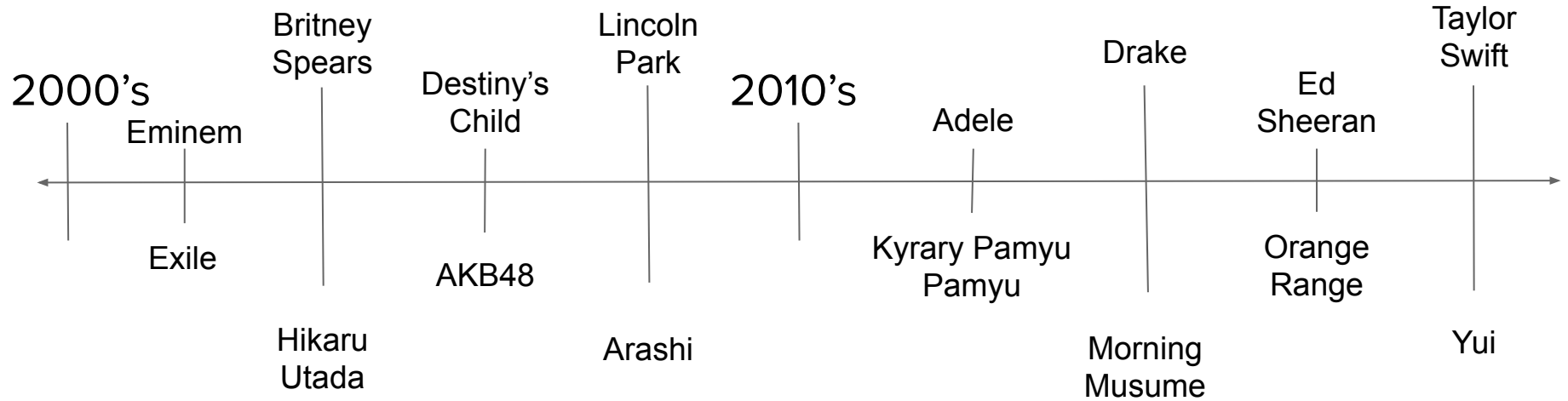
Examples of Idols (By Era)



Examples of Idols (By Era)



Examples of Idols (By Era)



Examples of Idols (Female, Japan)



Momoio Clover Z

Ranked Most Popular Girl
Group in Japan

AKB48

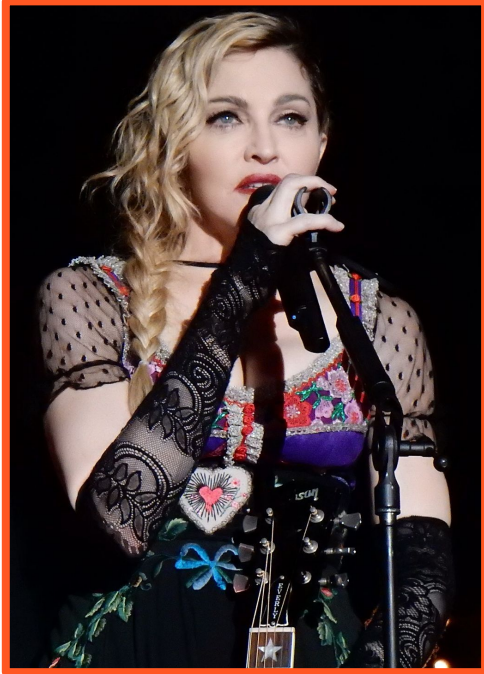
Highest Selling Girl
Group in Japan



Utada Hikaru

Best Selling Solo Female in Japan

Examples of Idols (Female, America)



Madonna

Best Selling Female Solo

Destiny's Child

Best Selling American Female Group



Taylor Swift

Most Awarded Female Artist

Examples of Idols (Male, Japan)



Arashi

Ranked Most Popular Male Group in Japan



B'z

Highest Selling Male Group in Japan



SMAP

Highest Selling Boy Band in Asia

Examples of Idols (Male, America)



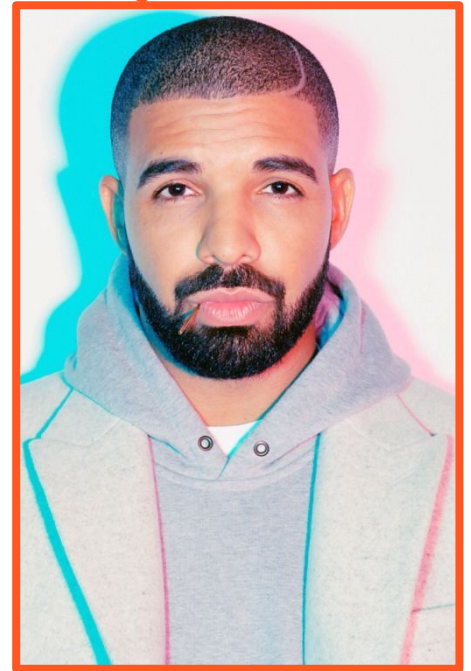
Backstreet Boys

Best Selling Pop Male
Group



Justin Bieber

Social Artist Award 2011-16



Drake

Highest Number of
Hits by Male Solo

Current Role of Pop Idols in Social Media and Society

- Study on people's reactions towards a certain Japanese pop group (Izuma, 2017)
 - Shown AKB48 idols
 - Assessed the attitude towards each of the 10 members and their real world impact
- The changing power of a passionate fan base, on the fans and on society. (Dai, 2018)
 - “Fantourism” has created a media and economic influence on par with major sporting events and teams.

Current Controversies and Endeavors of Pop Idols

- Sexualization of Women in Country Music Videos (Furmanovsky, 2008)
 - How a genre of music can affect perceptions of a gender based on looks and sexual appeal
- Misogynistic Lyrics in Modern Music (Frisby, 2010)
 - Derogatory terms in music and the effect it has on the people that listen to it
- Japan's right-wing political hip hop scene (Morris, 2013)
 - Xenophobic views reflect in his lyrics
- Crime Inciting Language in Hip-Hop Music (Balko, 2014)
 - Tiny Doo was arrested under Penal Code 185.9 for lyrics inciting motivation for crimes

Research Method

Study Participants

- 60 University Students
 - 30 Japanese
 - 15 Male
 - 15 Female
 - 30 American
 - 15 Male
 - 15 Female

Research Instrument

- Online Survey (Google Forms)
 - Japanese Survey
 - English Survey

[Our Survey \(English\)](#)

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